Cowboys

Canyon football coach Harry Welch observes as his team runs through drills.

Canyon's grid dynasty

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Canyon prides itself on hard practices because they help the team play "Cowboy football."

There is no easy explanation of "Cowboy football." If the team is pleased with its play, the coaches and players will say, "We played Cowboy football." If they play poorly, "We didn't play Cowboy football."

Probably the best way to describe the Canyon program is with a resume. In Coach Harry Welch's seven years, the Cowboys have compiled an 81-12 record, including a Southern Section record 46 straight games, won six league championships and three Conference championships.

That's Cowboy football.

Those numbers certainly establish the program among the elite in Southern California. But in Canyon Country, the Cowboys are definitely No. 1.

"I can't believe it," said Enrique Lopez, who was hired as an assistant after coaching at Alemany in Mission Hills. "I've never seen so much community support in my life."

Every Tuesday night, Canyon coaches show game films from the previous week's game at Lamp-

'We often outnumber the home crowd at away

Milleman's brother-in-law is an assistant coach at Alemany, so when Canyon played the Indians Oct. 7, Milleman and his fiancee went to the game. It was only the second or third prep game Milleman attended after graduating from St. Genevieve's in 1981, but he's been a regular at Cowboy home games ever since.

"I thought I'd go and watch and was impressed with their play," Milleman said. "When we played high school football, we never saw a team that could pass the ball. If you had third and 10, you were pretty much dead. This team has fourth and eight and goes for it and gets it like every time . . just because they can pass the ball.

"I'm amazed at their offense."

A number of current Cowboy players went to Canyon games when they were still students at Sierra Vista Junior High and dreamed of growing up to be Cowboys. That tradition continues.

"We have students who, that's all they think about in the eighth grade," said Sierra Vista physical education teacher Rick Knutson. "They can't wait until they get to Canyon and start playing football."

More than likely, those eighth graders will be winners in their careers at Canyon, which has not experienced a losing season in the Welch era. So why do the Cowboys

in our society," Welch said. "That's why kids get into drugs. If something is such a strong negative, why not turn it around and make it work positively?"

Welch has his detractors. When two starters quit the team last season after the Cowboys got off to a 1-2 start, the critics became more vocal, charging Welch was too hard on his players.

'Peer pressure is so important in our society. That's why kids get into drugs. If something is such a strong negative, why not turn it around and make it work positively?'

— Harry Welch
Canyon coach

But one of the players returned, Canyon won nine straight games before losing in the semifinals to Channel Islands, and the critics were silent.

"When we lose, I'm criticized for everything," Welch said. "If we were losing the critics would jump out of the closets and stand in line to say bad things about me."

Joe Zacharia, a linebacker on all three of Canyon's Nor-

Kolin new parks director